

REMARKS

The Office Action of April 29, 2008 has been reviewed and the comments therein carefully considered. Claims 18-26 and 33 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner in view of an earlier restriction requirement. Accordingly, claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are pending in this application, and claims 17 and 36 are in independent form.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 17 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness based upon United States Patent No. 6,666,586 to Wu et al. (hereinafter "the Wu patent") in view of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0150350 to Zimmer (hereinafter "the Zimmer publication"). In view of the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

As defined by amended independent claim 17, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing a cylindrical sleeve having a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount, are restricted to the central part of the sleeve mount and engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve without projecting into the interior of the cylindrical sleeve, thereby obstructing the cylindrical sleeve from rotating about the sleeve axis while allowing the cylindrical sleeve to be tilted in essentially all directions around the central part. The sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts that are essentially mirror symmetrical in relation to the central part. The means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

As defined by amended independent claim 36, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing the cylindrical sleeve having a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount and are restricted to the central part

of the sleeve mount. The means for securing are designed to engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve without projecting into the interior of the cylindrical sleeve, thereby obstructing the cylindrical sleeve from rotating about the sleeve axis while allowing the cylindrical sleeve to be tilted in essentially all directions around the central part. The sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts that are essentially mirror symmetrical in relation to the central part. The means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

The Wu patent is directed to an optic adaptor that connects first and second optic fibers in an aligned but spaced fashion for attenuation of optic signals traveling between the optic fibers. The optic adaptor (100) includes a stationary portion (101) to be mounted to a fixture, and a moveable portion (102) that is manually moveable with respect to the optic stationary portion (101) for adjusting attenuation of the optic signal passing through the adaptor (100). The optic adapter (100) includes a two-part sleeve mount (30 and 40) as shown in Figs. 5 and 13 for accommodating a cylindrical sleeve (20). The cylindrical sleeve (20) is provided in the optic adapter (100) of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter.

The Zimmel publication is directed to a fiber optic adapter and is provided by the Examiner as allegedly disclosing a means for preventing a split sleeve from rotating that protrudes into the slit between mount parts.

This combination of references fails to teach or suggest several elements of amended independent claims 17 and 36. First, this combination of references does not teach or suggest that the means for securing are designed to engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve without projecting into the interior of the cylindrical sleeve, thereby obstructing the cylindrical sleeve from rotating about the sleeve axis while allowing the cylindrical sleeve to be tilted in essentially all directions around the central part as required by amended independent claims 17 and 36. Support for this amendment can be found on page 3, lines 25-32, page 4, lines 26-29 and page 7, lines 7-11.

As the Examiner admits on page 3 of the Office action, the Wu patent does not teach or suggest a means for securing the split sleeve against rotation. The Zimmel publication does not cure this deficiency. The Zimmel publication discloses a fiber optic adapter with an attenuator (54, 154). The attenuator (54, 154) extends across a longitudinal

opening in a sleeve and protrudes into pockets formed in the inner wall of the housing halves (56, 57). While these pockets prevent the attenuator (54, 154) and sleeve from rotating within the longitudinal opening, they also restrict movement of the sleeve in any other direction. Therefore, the attenuator (54, 154) essentially restricts the freedom of movement of the sleeve in the interior of the housing halves. Accordingly, the combination of the Wu patent and the Zimmer publication does not teach or suggest that the means for securing obstruct the cylindrical sleeve from rotating about the sleeve axis while allowing the cylindrical sleeve to be tilted in essentially all directions around the central part as required by amended independent claims 17 and 36. In addition, the adapters disclosed by the Wu patent and the Zimmer publication have very different parts and construction and it would be impossible to modify the adapter disclosed by the Wu patent in view of the teachings found in the Zimmer publication.

In addition, the combination of the Wu patent and the Zimmer publication fails to teach or suggest that the sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts that are essentially mirror symmetrical in relation to the center part or that the means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount as required by amended independent claims 17 and 36. The Examiner contends that coupling ring (70) is equivalent to the means for securing. However, as clearly seen in Fig. 13, this coupling ring is outside of the central part. Furthermore, the Examiner contends that parts (60) and (111) are equivalent to the sleeve mount parts of the claimed invention. However, it is clear that these parts are not mirror symmetrical in relation to the central part as clearly shown in Fig. 5 of the Wu patent.

Finally, claims 17 and 36 further require that the means for securing are designed to engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve. Both the Wu patent and the Zimmer publication fail to teach or suggest such a feature. The Zimmer publication discloses the use of an attenuator (54, 154) positioned within slots (164) to secure the split sleeve (54, 152) against rotation. As can be clearly seen in Fig. 13 of the Zimmer publication, the attenuator (54, 154) never engages the longitudinal slit of the split sleeve (152).

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes that the subject matter of independent claims 17 and 36 is not rendered obvious by the Wu patent in view of the Zimmer publication. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 17 and 36 is respectfully requested.

Claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness based upon Wu patent in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 64-31104 to Kakii et al. (hereinafter "the Kakii publication"). In view of the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

As discussed hereinabove in greater detail, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount as defined by amended independent claims 17 and 36.

The Wu patent and the deficiencies thereof in regard to amended independent claims 17 and 36 were also discussed hereinabove in greater detail.

The Kakii publication is directed to an optical connector coupling sleeve. However, this reference does not cure above-described deficiencies of the Wu patent. More specifically, the Kakii publication does not teach or suggest means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The Examiner contends that the expansion member (2) described in the Kakii publication is equivalent to the means for securing of the claimed invention. However, the purpose of this expansion member (2) is not to prevent the split sleeve from rotation but to change the diameter of the sleeve. Even if this expansion member (2) was considered to prevent rotation of the split sleeve, the expansion member (2) does not allow the cylindrical sleeve to be tilted in essentially all directions around the central part. As clearly shown in Figs. 1 and 2 of the Kakii publication, the expansion member (2) extends along an entire length of the split sleeve (1). This would prevent tilting movement of the split sleeve (1) to either the right or left.

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes that the subject matter of independent claims 17 and 36 is not rendered obvious by the Wu patent in view of the Kakii publication. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 17 and 36 is respectfully requested.

Claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 depend from and add further limitations to independent claims 17 and 36 or a subsequent dependent claim and are believed to be patentable for the reasons discussed hereinabove in connection with independent claims 17 and 36. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 is respectfully requested.

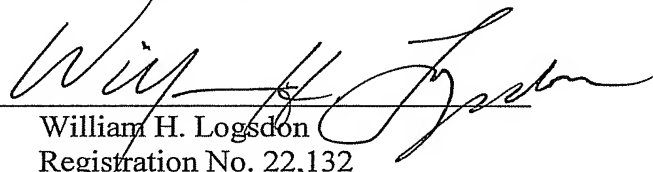
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Conclusion

Based on the foregoing remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of pending claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding any of the foregoing, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
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